

**ATSDR DAILY SITUATION REPORT (SITRE P)  
FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2015  
FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY (FOUO)**

**SUBJECT:** Gold King Mine Cleanup Site

**SITREP #** Gold King 4

**DATE AND TIME:** Friday, August 14, 2015, 5 PM EDT

\* **PERIOD REFLECTED:** 08/13/15 5PM EDT through 08/14/15 5PM EDT

**ATSDR POCs:** Tina Forrester, 770-488-3737, [txf5@cdc.gov](mailto:txf5@cdc.gov)  
James Holler, 770-488-3385, [jsh2@cdc.gov](mailto:jsh2@cdc.gov)

**BACKGROUND:** On August 5, 2015, while investigating the Gold King Mine in Colorado, an EPA cleanup team triggered a release of approximately 3 million gallons of mine wastewater into Cement Creek that ran into the Animas River. The local sheriff closed the river for all recreational uses with notifications to any water systems downstream to close their water intakes. This spill will impact regions 6, 8, and 9 – staff from ATSDR and EPA are working in all three regions to address concerns. On 8/8/15, ATSDR provided a letter health consult to the San Juan Basin Health Department (SJBHD) evaluating water samples collected by EPA.

**SUMMARY (August 14, 2015):**

- ATSDR R8 deployed staff attended (at EPA's request) meeting with City Council members and local elected officials to discuss the reopening of the Animas River for recreational purposes (5PM MDT).
- ATSDR R8 deployed staff gathered sediment and surface water sampling data (including methodologies and background information) from EPA and CDPHE in anticipation of a request to evaluate public health concerns associated with the recreational use of the Animas River. This will contribute to a comprehensive data package shaping ATSDR health assessment activities.
- ATSDR and EPA toxicologists/environmental health scientists discussed a possible request for ATSDR's contribution to the messaging regarding the re-opening of the Animas River for recreational purposes.
- ATSDR received a formal request (0945 MDT) from EPA to evaluate sediment and surface water sampling data and to identify any potential health concerns associated with recreational exposures from the Animas River (requested a response by 1030 MDT). In a follow-up call, EPA R8 Administrator McGrath and NCEH/ATSDR Director Breyse discussed EPA's request for ATSDR to provide any additional public health messages regarding the lifting of restrictions on the Animas River
- ATSDR provided the following public health recommendations to the Unified Command:
  - a. Don't drink untreated water from the river.
  - b. Wash hands thoroughly with soap and water after contact with the sediment and surface water.
  - c. Avoid contact in areas where there is visible discoloration in sediment or river water.
  - d. Wash clothes after contact with sediments and surface water.
- These were adopted by the SJBHD/Unified Command and inserted into the Joint Information Center (JIC) press release (available at: <http://www.durangogov.org/DocumentCenter/View/5259>).
- At 1200 MDT, the La Plata County Sheriff officially lifted restrictions on the Animas River
- ATSDR scientists participated in multiple coordination calls at EPA HQ, R6, R8, and R9.
- ATSDR reviewed incoming sampling data and supported the crafting of related health messages in conjunction with EPA HQ EOC staff.



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

**FORECASTING (Next 48 Hours):**

- The City of Durango and the unified command will hold a public meeting on Sunday evening, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2015.
  - ATSDR Management and the Director of SJBHD will discuss whether or not SJBHD would like ATSDR R8 deployed staff to participate in this public meeting
- ATSDR will contact the Rocky Mountain Poison Control Center to identify any public health concerns made to the call center by local residents. This information will be used to prepare health education materials and talking points for the upcoming public meeting.
- ATSDR will continue to coordinate with EPA and the Unified Command on the collection of additional sampling results (sediment and surface water) and background information as they become available. ATSDR scientists will continue to review this data to better understand any health risks associated with contaminant exposures.
- EPA-HQ EOC hours are changing to 0930-1900 EDT beginning 8/15/2015 to overlap with the staff located in Regions 6, 8, and 9.
- As the need for on-site support decreases, ATSDR will re-evaluate the need for on-site personnel.

**ATSDR RESOURCES CURRENTLY COMMITTED:**

TYPE (PERSONNEL, ETC.)	#	ACTIVITIES PERFORMED
ATSDR Personnel on the ground — Durango/Silverton, CO Farmington, NM	2	Technical support to local health departments, participating as part of incident command within the incident command.
ATSDR staff in EPA R8 EOC	1	Coordinating ATSDR activities with EPA emergency responders.
ATSDR staff in EPA HQ EOC	1	Coordinating between: ATSDR-HQ, EPA & ATSDR Regions 6, 8, and 9, EPA emergency responders. Attends EPA data, planning and regional coordination calls.
ATSDR HQ staff supporting the response	5	Providing technical support to field staff, reviewing data as requested, coordination, etc.

**ATSDR RESOURCES REQUESTED:**

TYPE (DATA ANALYSIS, PH ASSESS., ETC.)	#	DATE REQUESTED
No outstanding requests at this time.		

**DISTRIBUTION:** OS/ASPR, OS/ASL, OS/ASPA, IHS, CDC (OD & EOC).